ress. The lack of honor in which military service was popularly held became a decided handicap in dealing with an Occident armed to the teeth and from which only force could hope to win freedom and respect.

Serious, too, was the dependence upon an hereditary imperial line. In the Chinese system of government the monarch formed the keystone of the arch. The structure had been erected by great autocrats such as Ch?in Shih Huang Ti and Han Wu Ti. The hierarchy was simply hands and feet to the Emperor. Except for a regency in the case of a minor, no method had been devised and legalized, either by custom or formal enactment, for carrying on the government in the name of the prince. When a ruler or a ruling line proved hopelessly incompetent, the remedy to which resort was most frequently had was revolt. This in part accounts for the repeated change in dynasties and the much more frequent rebellions. Rebellion, indeed, was the chief means by which discontent could become vocal. It was usually either a protest or an instrument of the ambitious. Loyalty of a minister to his prince was one of the cardinal Confucian virtues, but, as we have seen, accepted political theory also had a place for popular revolt against a dissolute or unjust ruler and recognized in the *fait accompli* of a change in the reigning family the transfer of the mandate of Heaven. This was in marked contrast to Japan, where loyalty to the throne has been even more a cardinal virtue, where history records only one imperial line, and where at a very early time the tradition was established of having the rule carried on by the most competent, but in the name of the legitimate house. In China, whenever an able and vigorous monarch was on

the throne, the system worked well. When, however, as is inevitable under the principle of hereditary succession, a vicious or incompetent heir came into power, the machinery creaked and not infrequently broke down. As we have so often noted, it was this defect which largely accounted for the undoing of China in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Empire was headed by a decadent family at the time when it faced the greatest crisis of its history.

Probably the basic weakness lay in the fact that as the theory on which the government rested was carried to its logical conclusion stagnation was unavoidable and decay probable. As the